SHEILAGH S. JAMESON

R. R. 1 MIDNAPORE

ALBERTA

A 1-Act Play

IRISH PLAYS CUPID

by SHEILAGH S. JAMESON

MILLARVILLE, ALBERTA

R. R. 1 Midnapore
Alberta
April 24, 1945

The Judges
Playwriting Contest
Alberta Folklore, Playwriting, and Local History Project
Department of Extension, University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta

Gentlemen:

For this play, IRISH PLAYS CUPID, I have not chosen any of the dramatic incidents or personages in the history of the West. I have endeavoured to present a little picture of ordinary life and happenings, showing to some degree the habits and customs of settlers here in the 90's. I have tried, also, to capture something of the indescribable spirit of free-and-easy Westernism.

The characters are the type of people who lived in the Midnapore-Millarville district, south of Calgary at that time. These were mainly Old Country people who came to seek adventure or build up broken fortunes and remained because the West gripped and held them. They were interspersed with a few American Westerners.

The situation is one which could, and, with variations, undoubtedly did develop on numerous occasions.

I wish, also, to certify that this play is my own work hitherto unpublished and unproduced.

Sheilagh S. Jameson

File Copy
Honorable Mention
Alberta Play Contest
1945—

I R I S H P L A Y S C U P I D

by

Sheilagh Jameson

<u>Irish Plays Cupid</u> was awarded honorable mention in the 1945 Playwriting Competition sponsored by the Alberta Folklore and Local History Project.

IRISH PLAYS CUPID

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CHARACTERS: IRISH DONOVAN - as Irish as his name. He undertakes to straighten out matters.
NORAH DONOVAN - his daughter.
SLIM SUMMERS - as fine a cowboy as ever courted Norah.
GREGORY HOLMES- a typical English younger son in the process of being Westernized.
GWEN VAUGHN-HALL - Gregory's fiancee just out from England and due for a rude awakening.
VIVIAN THORNE - Gwen's friend. The West and Western mankind thrill her.
DAVEY WILLIAMS- a prospector.

PLACE: A little country store, 20 odd miles south of Calgary.

TIME: A summer afternoon in the latter part of the 1890's.

SCENE: The living-room in Irish's home. The furniture is plain and suitable to the period. A long dining table with a bench behind it, is pusned close to the wall, centre back. A leather-covered settee at the left and an arm chair on the right may be supplemented by several chairs at convenient points. A tall cabinet stands in a corner. The door left leads to the store and the door right to the kitchen.

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS:

Genial, big-hearted Irish Donovan is a Rebellion man, now passed his prime. He runs a store and Post Office, raises cattle and trades horses. The happiness of his daughter lies nearest to his heart. Then comes the welfare of his neighbors and the development of the West. He is dressed in riding breeches, boots and short sporting coat - all reminiscent of Dublin.

Norah Donovan is much like her father in disposition but has not yet developed his easy going tolerance. She is a capable attractive girl, slightly spoiled. Her plain but becoming dress has the long sleeves, tight waist and long full skirt of the day.

Slim Summers is a healthy, wholesome, clear-thinking American cowboy. He wears full cowboy regalia. When he appears on the stage the second time he is without his chaps and spurs.

Gregory Holmes is just ready to settle down. The boastful trend of his letters home have run him into trouble. His suit of English cut and make has seen better days.

Gregory's fiancee, Gwen Vaughn-Hall, is a tall, fair unexpressive young woman. She and Vivian both wear coats and skirts with high white collars and matching stocks or ties. Their accent is decidedly English, as is Gregory's.

Vivian Thorne covers a good heart under a vivacious, flirtatious exterior.

Davey Williams, a sturdy prospector of uncertain age, is dressed in the shirt and overalls of a working man.

Irish Donovan is discovered sitting in his arm chair reading the Eye Opener. Then a cheery voice outside left exit says, "Is anybody home?"

IRISH: Sure there is. Come on in.

(Slim Summers enters. His cowboy hat is in his hand and his spurs are jingling. He walks in easily and sits down)

IRISH: Well, me boy, what's new?

SLIM: Why ask me when you're readin' the Eye Opener? Jest the same I'll lay yuh five to one that I can tell yuh some news that yuh caint find there.

IRISH: Maybe ye can, son. (He pulls out pipe, knife and plug of T&B) Got the makings?

SLIM: (getting BullDurham tobacco sack out of his shirt pocket and starting to roll a cigarette) Right here, thanks.

IRISH: Maybe ye can. Fire away.

SLIM: Where's Miss Norah? I want a real audience when I tell news.

IRISH: (chuckling) Sure, I thought ye'd be trumping up some excuse to see her. Last time ye were looking for horses and wanted to know if she'd seen any strays.

SLIM: Uh-huh. (grinning) A heap o'critters must have strayed that day. Tom and Scottie were already here makin' earnest inquiries when I drifted in.

IRISH: (calling) Norah!

(A voice off stage right answers, "Yes Dad," and Norah Donovan enters. Slim rises rather awkwardly and says, "Howdy, Miss Norah." Norah greets him demurely and stands by her father's chair)

IRISH: Slim, here, is after telling us some news.

NORAH: (to Slim) Oh, what is it? Are you on your way out of town?

SLIM: Yep. An' I sure split the breeze gettin' here.

NORAH: (seating herself on the arm of her father's chair) Well, do tell us. Has the Queens Hotel burned down or has Johnnie Hamilton left town?

SLIM: (sitting again on chair at left) Wall, no, neither. There's a couple o'strangers in town.

NORAH: And you practically ran the legs off your poor Dusty tearing out here to tell us that?

SLIM: Wall, these aint jest ordinary strangers. They're women.

NORAH: Who are they? For Mercy's sakes tell us.

SLIM: They're fresh out from the Old Country and their handles are Miss Vaughn-Hall and Miss Thorne.

IRISH: Sure they have good enough names on them, but very English.

NORAH: That's not very wonderful news. It's a free country. People can come if they want to.

SLIM: But these here girls have come out to marry Gregory Holmes. Leastways one of 'em has and the other's her teammate.

NORAH: Gregory Holmes? I knew he was engaged to an English girl.

SLIM: I reckon he's been drawin' the long bow considerable in his letters. His girl is expectin' to see a real spacious ranch house, with the prairies dotted with cattle carrying the Holmes brand and herded by a bevy of riders callin' him boss. She even said something about him making quite a haul out of his gophers. (They laugh)

NORAH: Oh, the poor girl. He hasn't any stock has he Dad? (Irish shakes his head) And when she sees his miserable little shack with it's sod roof - Men are such brutes.

SLIM: (half-rising and bowing) Much obliged ma'am.

NORAH: Well, isn't that an awful trick? Dad, don't you think Mr. Holmes is a pretty poor customer?

IRISH: (slowly) No, girl, I don't. He's kind, he'd stand by a fella in a tight place. He's decent and white, - and he's good to horses. Does that tally up with your count, Slim?

SLIM: Yes. He's a decent hombre and he's not so green now neither.

IRISH: The only trouble with him is that he's had too much money.

NORAH: (cuttingly) I suppose it's alright to tell impossible yarns like he does?

IRISH: Sure a bit of imagination doesn't hurt a man. It improves him - like salt in biscuits.

NORAH: Humph!

IRISH: No, I think a good wife would be the making of Holmes, provided he stays in the West. Wonder if she's the right girl for him. She'll need plenty of backbone and grit if she's going to be a Western rancher's wife.

NORAH: She'll sure need the backbone to be Mrs. Holmes.

SLIM: She must think he's alright anyway coming half across the world to marry him.

NORAH: Huh! I'd like to see me doing a thing like that.

SLIM: So would I - if I was the lucky fella.

(Norah gives him a withering look)

IRISH: (thoughtfully) You know, this is bad. I don't like talking about a man's private affairs but this concerns other people. Gregory hasn't any money and they won't send him any more from Home, he told me so. That's why he went off prospecting in the mountains with Davey.

NORAH: He isn't likely to find anything is he?

IRISH: Not very, I'm afraid, even though Davey Williams has had experience. If itwas a few years back, maybe - but now there's not much talk of lucky strikes or of placer mining at all.

SLIM: (nods) It's a pretty mess alright. Perleywanted these girls to stay on at the Alberta Hotel but they were all for coming right out to the ranch. They think he has a house keeper and a flock of servants. He's told them that Mrs. Burton is a real mother to him. They think she's right there on the spot all the time, coddling little Gregory. He neglected to mention that she mothers every livin' soul from Calgary to MacLeod.

NORAH: What are they going to do?

SLIM: They're coming here. When they would pull out Perley told them to head for Irish Donovan's and got Johnny Hamilton to send around one of his best teams with a driver. They will be showing up pretty soon.

IRISH: Perley's just passing the buck. Confound him.

NORAH: (jumping up) Mercy on us. I'll have to fix things up a bit and try to make it as nice as I can for them. (She puts her hand on Irish's shoulder) Daddy, what are we going to do about these poor girls?

IRISH: Well, honey, we'll try to make them feel at home.

NORAH: Yes, of course. But about Mr. Holmes. They'll have to be told.

IRISH: We'll let Holmes break the news in his own gentle way. It's a grand tongue he has on him, so he can use it.

NORAH: But she'll have to be told that he's away.

IRISH: Oh yes. We'll tell her that. But I reckon they'll have to work out their own troubles.

NORAH: (to Slim as she plays with her father's hair) Whenever he says that about anybody he starts right in to help them.

IRISH: Get along with you, lass. Sure I never meddle with other people's affairs, only my own.

NORAH: (turning towards Slim from the door) Did you see them? What are they like?

SLIM: You bet I saw them. Miss Vaughn-Hall, the one Holmes is going to marry, is a big upstanding girl, sorta fair. The other's a little sorrel. I bet she's right up on the bit all the time, that one.

NORAH: Oh! And how do you know, pray?

SLIM: Could tell by her eye. A person's like a horse, you can tell a lot about them by the look in their eye. Now you'd be surprised if you knew what your eyes tell me sometimes.

NORAH: None of your familiarity, please Mr. Summers, or you'll be surprised at some of the things my tongue will tell you. (Norah exits)

IRISH: (laughing) She scored that time, me lad.

SLIM: She always does, with me.

NORAH: (poking her head in the door) Dad, will you keep an eye on the store? I'll be too busy.

SLIM: (standing) Well I guess I'll mosey along now.

IRISH: Auck, man. You'll stay the night of course. The Quorn will get along without you until to-morrow. That will be enough of a ride for one day anyway. You put your horse in and gave him a feed, I suppose?

SLIM: Yes, and if Miss Norah don't object I will stop over.

NORAH: Of course you can stay. You can look after the store too and show us how.

SLIM: I'll do that, but you'll have to come with me so as I can teach yuh proper.

NORAH: Oh, will I? (Exits)

IRISH: (chuckling) You make way slowly, me boy.

SLIM: Slowly? Good Lord, man. I'd say backwards. (He shifts uncomfortably and leans forward looking at the floor) Irish, it's kind of hard to talk like this but I bin wanting to tell yuh. I'm serious about her. (nodding towards the kitchen) I love her and I want to marry her.

IRISH: I know that, son.

SLIM: I'm no angel of course, but I've lived as decent a life as I could and I aint ashamed to look any man in the face.

IRISH: Sure I know that, too.

SLIM: I've got some good horses, and a little bunch of cattle. I got a pretty neat little ranch in the Foothills picked out too.

IRISH: Son, you're a broth of a boy, and one after me own heart. I'd like to see me little girl marry you if she's going to marry anybody - and I reckon I can't keep her always. I've tried to do me best for her, God knows, but it's not an easy life she has here at all. Of course it is up to her.

SLIM: Well do you think she - I mean do you think I have a chance?

IRISH: I don't see why not. But you'll have to figure it out for yourself. (Slim looks up quickly and grins. There's a pause) The throuble is that she's too sure of you. If you could make her jealous (slaps leg) I have it me boy. This little sorrel ye mentioned.

SLIM: Yuh mean to act as though I was kinda sweet on her?

IRISH: That's me idea exactly. Norah will probably get a little mad, but she'll turn as docile as a lamb - if she loves ye.

SLIM: Oh mama! That's a man-sized "if". (pauses) You're some Cupid, aint yuh?

IRISH: There's divil a better one in the North West Territories.

SLIM: Wall I dunno, but it seems sort of an underhand trick to play, - like havin' the cards stacked.

IRISH: Sure, all's fair in love or war and it's the only way I could win her mother. Norah's a lot like her, too.

(Norah dashes in right and across the stage)

NORAH: They're here! I saw the team turn in. Come on, Daddy. (Exits left)

IRISH: (rising) 'Tis a grand opportunity ye have, Slim. (turning at the door) Leave on your chaps and lay on the wild and woolly West a foot thick. It's romantic ye know. (He winks and exits)

(Slim looks in mirror on wall, slicks his hair, straightens his neckerchief and hitches up his belt. Gwen Vaughn-Hall and Vivian Thorne enter followed by Norah and Irish)

IRISH: (grandly) Now young ladies let me introduce to you a true son of the Great West. Miss Vaughn-Hall and Miss Thorne, Mr. Summers.

SLIM: (bowing to Gwen) I'm glad to make your acquaintance. (bowing to Vivian) And I shore am glad to meet you, Ma'am.

(The strangers murmur "Ho-Do-You-Do". Then Gwen turns to Irish)

GWEN: I hope you will forgive us, absolute strangers for descending upon you like this. We are on our way to the ranch of my fiance Gregory Holmes. I should have written him that we were coming but I wanted to surprise him. So foolish of me.

IRISH: Sure, we are very glad to have ye. Mr. Holmes is away on a little trip in the mountains at present. You must make your home with us until he returns.

GWEN: Oh I couldn't think of imposing upon your hospitality like that. Hasn't Gregory a house-keeper and a good staff of servants?

(Norah looks most uncomfortable and she and Slim exchange glances)

IRISH: I wouldn't be knowing just what Holmes' domestic arrangements are. But I'm a friend of his and I'll certainly look after ye until he returns. As a matter of fact it's a favor ye'll be doing us by staying here. Norah misses out on feminine companionship. She gets tired of us men?

NORAH: I sure do.

VIVIAN: Just fancy!

NORAH: I'll certainly be glad to have you stay with us.

GWEN: Thank you very much. You're most kind, I'm sure.

VIVIAN: Oh, thanks awfully. (She turns to Slim) I'm sure, Mr. Summers, that I've seen you before, Weren't you riding a terrible bucking animal down the main street - what's it's name? - Steven Avenue, this morning?

SLIM: (embarrassed) I guess I'll have to plead guilty, ma'am. Imagine yuh recognizin' a plain ordinary cowpuncher like me.

VIVIAN: Oh, Mr. Summers!

NORAH: You didn't tell us this little item.

IRISH: Were ye shooting up the town, boy?

SLIM: Aw shucks, It was nothin'. I just delivered a bunch of horses that we broke at the Quorn for the Mounted Police. I wasn't sure of one, he was a kindova kinky, stiff-necked, ornery son-of-a-er-beg pardon - er - little cayuse. I thought I'd try to take a little more of the ginger out of him before I turned him over, We got a reputation for well-broke horses. He wasn't buckin' bad anyway, just cat-hoppin' a bit.

VIVIAN: Oh gracious! I thought it was terrible. Could a horse ever throw you right off, Mr. Summers?

SLIM: Wall, I reckon. I was piled once in a funny sort of way. It shore was comical.

VIVIAN: Oh, do tell us about it, please.

SLIM: Wall, I was breakin' a real bronk. He was a Buckskin an' as ornery a bit of hoss-flesh as ever lifted a hoof. As soon as I hit the saddle he lit out for the clouds an' I'm hanged if he didn't nearly reach them.

SLIM: He did every kind of jumpin' twistin', and sun-fishin' known to hosses and thought up some new styles of his own. Before long I discovered he was slippin' right through the saddle - it was cinched up tight too. Through he went like a snake and left me sittin' there like a fool.

NORAH: (sarcastically) Right up in mid-air, I suppose?

SLIM: Yeah. It shore felt strange.

VIVIAN: Oh, this is so thrilling.

GWEN: But why didn't the saddle fall on the ground when the horse was no longer holding it up?

SLIM: Wall, yuh see ma'am it was this-a-way. Jest when he went through the saddle he was going under a high cross rail that went over the gateway to a small corral. Wall I caught that rail and hung there with the saddle between my knees.

VIVIAN: (clasping hands) Oh, what happened then?

SLIM: The cayuse soon got tired of buckin' around in the little corral all by himself so he headed back for the big one, I shifted a bit as he came an' I'm hanged if he didn't buck right under that saddle again. It gave him a kind of a jolt to find me aboard him again I reckon. Anyway all of a sudden he went as docile as a kitten. Never bucked again neither.

VIVIAN: Oh, I never heard anything <u>so</u> thrilling!

NORAH: (cuttingly) That must have been a bit awkward with the saddle on backwards and you facing the wrong way.

SLIM: (quickly) You're right, it was, Deuced awkward, (turning back to Vivian) You see, Ma'am, you can always tell what a hoss is going to do by watching his ears. And o'course I couldn't see his ears, but I watched his tail and that did just as well.

IRISH: Some quare things do happen alright. I'd like to have seen that.

NORAH: (significantly) So would I.

VIVIAN: Oh, dear. I should have been <u>so</u> frightened.

NORAH: (to Gwen) Miss Vaughn-Hall, you must be hot and dusty after your drive. Wouldn't you like to go to your room? And you, too, Miss Thorne?

GWEN: Thank you, very much. I should.

VIVIAN: Thank you. Really I can scarcely tear myself away from Mr. Summers' so interesting stories.

SLIM: I'd be right glad to tell yuh some more later ma'am.

VIVIAN: Oh thank you so much. (Exit Gwen, Vivian and Norah at right)

IRISH: (slapping Slim on the back) I must congratulate ye son. Couldn't have done better meself.

SLIM: (mopping brow) Oh mama! I feel like all sorts of a fool, but chiefly a braggin', lyin' kind of a one.

(Enter Norah from right. She gives Slim a puzzled look)

IRISH: Well honey, what do you think of them?

NORAH: I like Miss Vaughn-Hall. I sure feel sorry for her though. (to Slim) My you're a rootin', tootin', dyed-in-th-wool bronco-buster, aren't you?

SLIM: Wall I'm kinda modest, of course but -

NORAH: Modest! You sounded it. Why ever did you string them along with a yarn like that anyway?

IRISH: That's just the sort of thing they wanted to hear? Didn't you see that little red-head drinking in every word?

NORAH: Oh goodness, yes! I'm not blind. There, I heard someone in the store. Will you go out, Daddy?

SLIM: That's my job.

(Norah exits right and the men left. After a few seconds the door on the right opens and Vivian enters followed by Gwen)

VIVIAN: Oh, they have gone! How disappointing!

GWEN: I do wish you hadn't insisted on coming back out here. I should like to have rested. (They sit down)

VIVIAN: My dear, how could you rest when everything is so new and thrilling. Isn't that cowboy just the most delightful thing you ever set eyes upon? That costume and that delicious drawl! Did you notice the way he said "Ma'am"?

GWEN: Rather! I also noticed the way you hung on his every word. It was most forward. Really you have gone practically balmy over every male creature we have seen out here. Do you remember that Mountie in Calgary?

VIVIAN: (clasping hands) As if I could ever forget that gorgeous being? (pauses, then earnestly) Darling, don't you really think this is a marvellous country? Don't you find it all so free, so open, so new and different somehow?

GWEN: It is rather too soon to judge the country but I have found people most friendly and the welcome we got here was really touching. Still I do wish Gregory were here.

VIVIAN: Don't fret Gwen. He is sure to return soon.

(Gwen rises, restlessly crosses the room, then turns to Vivian)

GWEN: Viv dear, I want to tell you something. I am quite sure something is wrong - about Gregory, I mean.

VIVIAN: Not really! Do you think he is ill?

GWEN: No, I don't think it's his health. But I'm certain these people are keeping something from me. I thought in Calgary that everyone behaved strangely when I spoke of Gregory. Now I know it. I must find out what it is. (slowly) I am beginning to think it was a terrible mistake coming out here.

VIVIAN: (jumping up and impulsively putting her arms around Gwen) You mustn't take on so, dear. I'm sure you are entirely wrong. You are just getting one of your heads. Come back and lie down for awhile. I want to change my frock anyway.

GWEN: Yes, you go on in Vivian, but I'll stay here. I am going to solve this beastly mystery.

VIVIAN: But how?

GWEN: I don't know. (looking around) Maybe if I listened I could hear someone say something about it.

VIVIAN: (shocked) Oh Gwen, you wouldn't eavesdrop?

GWEN: Vivian, I'm desperate, I tell you. It is my right to know and I shall. So go on now, please.

VIVIAN: Well, if you insist, but -

GWEN: I do insist, my dear.

(Vivian exits. Gwen sits dejectedly for a minute, then rises with a determined air. There is a sound of men's voices and laughter at left entrance. Gwen hesitates, then hurries over and hides behind a high cabinet in the corner. Irish and Slim enter)

SLIM: Oh mama! This will be more exciting than a Fourth of July celebration back in Arizona.

IRISH: It might be, lad. We better let Norah in on this. (calls) Norah!

NORAH: (looking in door at right) Yes, Dad.

IRISH: Come in and close the door.

SLIM: And yuh better see that nobody's listenin' at the key-hole.

NORAH: What's happened now for goodness' sake?

SLIM: I bet yuh couldn't guess.

NORAH: Mr. Holmes isn't here surely?

SLIM: Yuh got it dead centre. Bobby Burton's just told us that they're back and Holmes is ridin' over. Headed into a pretty mess, aint he?

NORAH: He made it. I'm sure not wasting any sympathy on him. Miss Vaughn-Hall has all mine.

IRISH: Well he can tell her everything now himself.

(There is a shout from the store, "Is anyone Home?". Irish and Slim exit left)

NORAH: (bitterly) Men! They're all alike, the creatures, all except Daddy.

(Norah hurries out right. Gwen appears, looking dazed)

GWEN: (speaking slowly, bitterly) I heard alright. "They're back"? "a trip in the mountains". He's married, of course. Just back from his honeymoon no doubt. How could he? His letters never hinted of any change of feeling. Everyone here knew all - and they pitied me. Pitied! (determinedly) There is just one thing I can do and that I certainly shall.

(She quickly exits right. Very soon Gregory Holmes and Irish enter)

GREGORY: So Gwen is really here. I can't believe it. By Jove, I'll be glad to see her. Where is she?

IRISH: In her room, now. Holmes, you won't mind if an old fella like me speaks pretty straight?

GREGORY: Oh no, sir.

IRISH: This girl came out West to marry you.

GREGORY: Naturally! That was settled years ago. But right now -er-

IRISH: She thinks you're a top-noteher of a rancher and that you just about own this country. And as for your house, sure it's expecting she is to see something in the nature of a Spanish patio.

GREGORY: Oh Lord! I suppose I have been exaggerating. But they're most gullible over there, you know.

IRISH: No doubt it is a temptation.

GREGORY: Confound it, Irish. I want to marry Gwen, of course, but I'm jolly well broke. I had no luck prospecting and I worked like a nigger, too, by Jove. I know the Pater won't advance me any more, either.

IRISH: I'd advise ye to tell her everything - make a clean breast of it. And as for the money, something is sure to turn up. Anyway the young ladies will be entirely welcome to stay here as long as they wish.

GREGORY: Thanks, Irish.

NORAH: (looking in door right) How-do-you-do, Mr. Holmes?

GREGORY: (rising and bowing) How-do-you-do, Miss Donovan?

IRISH: Norah, me girl, where might our visiters be?

NORAH: I don't know, Dad. I was just looking for them.

(The door left opens and Vivian and Slim enter)

VIVIAN: (surprised) Oh, I say, Gregory.

GREGORY: Vivian, by Jove. (They shake hands) It's ripping to see you again, old thing.

VIVIAN: You're looking very fit, Gregory.

GREGORY: Oh, I'm in the pink. Where's Gwen?

VIVIAN: I thought she was in here. She'll be frightfully glad to see you Greg. Isnt this a topping country? Mr. Summers has been showing me the horses and the mountains and everything. I wanted to walk over to the mountains but he thought we better wait for another day. It'll be too frightfully thrilling. (to Norah) I suppose you often walk over?

NORAH: (sarcastically) Well no. You see it is 60 odd miles and when I go on a little jaunt like that I want a good horse under me. You and Mr. Summers will need to leave really early in the morning. I didn't know Mr. Summers was such an accomplished walker. I never knew him to walk any farther than to the nearest barn or corral.

VIVIAN: Oh, I walk a great deal at home. I just love it.

NORAH: Well, no doubt he'll develop the habit. (to Slim) I guess you'll need to take to wearing different boots. High-heeled riding boots wont be so awfully comfortable when you're on foot all the time.

SLIM: (looking at his feet) Wall - er-

VIVIAN: Oh, isn't that too bad. That's such picturesque footwear, too.

NORAH: (sweetly) Do you think so? Well maybe he'll hobble around in them anyway, then.

IRISH: (sternly) Norah!

NORAH: (innocently) Yes, Dad?

IRISH: Well -ah - (pauses) I know Mr. Holmes is very anxious to see his fiancee. Sure you could go to her room and tell her he is here.

NORAH: Yes, Dad. (Exits)

(Vivian crosses to Gregory at back of stage and they converse in low voices. Irish goes to Slim at front of stage)

IRISH: (in stage whisper) Didn't it work like a charm, me boy?

SLIM: (running his hand through his hair) Oh mama! She's mad anyway.

IRISH: Hopping mad and jealous. Ye've divil a worry, Slim. Ye have a trump hand so just use a little diplomacy in playing your cards.

SLIM: I reckon I ain't exactly a diplomat.

IRISH: Auck! Ye can handle a horse so ye should be able to handle a woman. (suddenly) But what about her? (nodding at Vivian) Will she -?

SLIM: (shaking his head) She's in on the secret. It seemed only decent to tell her everything.

IRISH: What did she say?

SLIM: She said it was "so thrilling to be Cupid's assistant".

IRISH: What else?

SLIM: That she supposed there were other cowboys. Anyway she really believed that the Mounties are "mah colahful". (They laugh)

(Norah rushes in, excited and worried)

NORAH: Miss Vaughn-Hall is leaving.

GREGORY: What!

NORAH: She says she would like to go right back to Calgary so she can take the next train and she said -(pauses)

GREGORY: What did she say? For Heaven's sake tell me her exact words.

NORAH: (slowly) She said she didn't care to see Mr. Holmes.

GREGORY: Good Lord! What the devil has happened?

(The door right opens and Gwen enters. Gregory says, "Gwen, my dear!" and starts towards her. She stops him with a motion)

GWEN: (meaningfully) Well Gregory! (to Irish) Mr. Donovan, would it be possible for you to arrange transportation back to Calgary for me?

IRISH: Of course, but my dear young lady -

GREGORY: (desperately) Gwen, what do you mean?

GWEN: Exactly what I said. I am going home. (to Vivian) Are you coming Viv?

VIVIAN: But Gwen why - I'm sure -

GWEN: You must decide (to Norah) Thank you so much, my dear. (Norah takes her hand)

GREGORY: You can't make a scene like this, Gwen.

GWEN: You always did loathe scenes, didn't you? Well, I'm not making a scene. I'm merely fading out of the picture.

GREGORY: This is preposterous. I demand an explanation.

GWEN: (coldly and wonderingly) You demand an explanation from me? If there is any explaining to be done you are the one to do it.

GREGORY: What do you mean?

GWEN: You know what I mean. Can you honestly tell me that there is no reason why we couldn't get married immediately and go to your ranch?

(Gregory looks uncomfortable. A loud knock sounds immediately on the door at left. Everyone turns that way. Irish calls "Come in". Davey Williams enters. His air is one of great excitement)

DAVEY: Howdy, folks. Is Gregory Holmes - (He suddenly sees Gregory and dashing across, seizes Gregory's hand and pumps it up and down) Gregory, boy. We're rich! We struck it!

GREGORY: What?

DAVEY: Gold! Just look at this. (He produces a small nugget from his pocket)

GREGORY: Good Lord! You don't say! Look here, Irish, by Jove!

(The others gather around exclaiming and congratulating)

DAVEY: There's more like it, Greg my boy, where that came from.

GREGORY: Was it on the same creek? Tell us all about it, man.

DAVEY: Yep. You mind that place that I said looked good? Well, I thought I'd try it again the very day you pulled out, jest a bit higher up, an' the first pan showed gold. Each one I washed after that was a little better.

GREGORY; By Jove. Why didn't we find it before then?

DAVEY: Gold's a fickle jade. You got to court her long and careful and even then she don't always smile on you.

GREGORY: By Golly! I can't believe it. Is there much?

DAVEY: It ain't the richest creek I seen, but there's plenty of gold there.

IRISH: What's happening to it now, boy? Ye didn't walk off and leave it.

DAVEY: Irish, I ain't a fool. I've got a pal there that I kin trust. I had to come back here to locate Greg. He's got a third share of that find.

GREGORY: (shaking his hand again) Davey, you're an honest man. More than that you're an angel from heaven.

DAVEY: I bin called a number of names in my life but nobody never dubbed me an angel before.

GREGORY: (crossing to Gwen who has been standing to one side) Gwen, I have enough money now to build you a home. Will you marry me?

GWEN: Do you mean to say that we can - that - that lack of money was the only obstacle to our marriage?

GREGORY: Of course. I'm afraid I misled -

GWEN: My dear, why didn't you tell me that was all? I'd have married you anyway.

GREGORY: By Jove, Gwen, you're - But whatever did you think was wrong?

GWEN: Never mind. That's of no consequence now.

GREGORY: No, not now. You're here and oh, my darling - (He makes a motion as though to take her in his arms, then stops embarrassed and looks around)

IRISH: It seems that ye haven't a thing to worry about now except maybe ye'd like a little privacy. Well ye can have that, boy, we'll all be -

GREGORY: Oh no! But if you will excuse us please, I'd like to-er- er - show Gwen the - er - mountains. (all laugh. Gweh and Gregory exit)

NORAH: I never knew the Rockies to be so popular as they are to-day.

DAVEY: Speakin' of the Rockies I'll have to be thinkin' of gettin' back there.

IRISH: Sure, what's your hurry? Gold will keep. Ye better stop the night.

DAVEY: Thanks, Irish. I will. I'll have to find out what Gregory wants to do with his share an' I'll have some business in Calgary, too. Right now I could do with a smoke but I'm out of baccy.

IRISH: It's forgetting me manners I am. Come on out to the store and help yourself. I'll want to hear more about that lucky strike of yours too.

VIVIAN: May I come and hear the story, too? It's all so thrilling.

DAVEY: Sure thing, ma'am.

(Vivian and Davey exit. They are followed by Irish but at the door he beckons to Slim. Then he indicates Norah, who is examining the nugget which remains on the table. He is whispering to Slim as they go out. As soon as the door closes Norah pushes the nugget across the table. He is whispering to Slim as they go out. As soon as the door closes Norah pushes the nugget across the table, drops into a chair, buries her face in her arms on the table and sobs. Very soon Slim enters. He crosses to Norah)

SLIM: Norah! What's wrong?

NORAH: (without lifting her head) Nothing.

SLIM: (putting a hand on her shoulder) Norah, I want to talk to you. (she sobs) Why are you cryin', little girl? Tell me.

NORAH: (in muffled tones) I'm just glad that Miss Vaughn-Hall and Mr. Holmes are so happy. (sobs)

SLIM: (grinning and patting her shoulder) Norah darling. You and I could be just as happy. (No answer. Slim puts his hand under her chin lifting her face)

SLIM: Look at me. Norah, will yuh marry me?

NORAH: Oh, Slim! (In one movement Norah is on her feet and in Slim's arms, hiding her face against his shoulder)

SLIM: Will yuh? Do yuh love me?

NORAH: (nods head) Yes.

SLIM: (raising her head) Well, what are those tears for now? (He pulls out a red polka-dot handkerchief and dries them)

NORAH: (half-laughing but with the odd sniff) Because we are so happy.

SLIM: Happy! You've said it, sweetheart. (He kisses her. Suddenly the door opens and Davey Williams voice precedes him and Irish into the room)

DAVEY: O'course back durin' the gold rush we - Oh - er - I guess-

SLIM: (releasing Norah) Come in folks. Norah and me are engaged.

(Vivian enters, just as he speaks. Norah runs to Irish. He puts his arm around her and pats her shoulder)

IRISH: Sure, honey, that's fine. There's nobody I'd rather call son than Slim here. (He shakes Slim's hand)

DAVEY: (scratching head) Shucks. This getting engaged must be catching. I reckon I better pull out.

VIVIAN: (coyly) Oh no, don't do that, Mr. Williams. This is so exciting. (To Norah and Slim) I hope you two will be very happy and all that. And I'm sure you should be. You know, Miss Donovan, that young man does nothing but rave about you when you're out of sight. He never even looked at me or the mountains either. It was most provoking, I assure you.

NORAH: (sternly) Slim, you are the -

SLIM: (grinning) It warn't me. It was Cupid there, (indicating Irish)

NORAH: Cupid?

IRISH: (quickly) Sure, I have the grandest idea. We'll have a little dance to celebrate. (Gregory and Gwen enter from left)

NORAH: A dance? Tonight? Oh goody!

IRISH: We'll invite everybody who comes in. Somebody can ride over to Burton's and Bobby can go over to Sandersons. Got your mouth-organ here Davey? (Davey produces it and plays a few bars in lively dance time) Good, and we'll get Jimmy Riley to bring his fiddle. He can let Morrisons know, too.

VIVIAN: (clasping her hands) Oh, this is <u>so</u> thrilling.

GREGORY: By Jove, that's a fine idea.

NORAH: Well, I'll have to get busy. We'll have a bite of supper. Then we must clear out this room and make loads of sandwiches and -

SLIM: Sweetheart, you're the boss. Just give me a job. I may as well get used to you bossing me around, anyway.

GWEN: I think I had better get used to some things, too. (To Norah) I should be very glad to help you if you will tell me what to do.

NORAH: Oh, that's fine.

DAVEY: Maybe, I hadn't ought to mention this but I'm a humdinger on the cook-stove. I kin turn out delicious biscuits in double quick time.

VIVIAN: Oh, Mr. Williams, do let me help you?

DAVEY: Well, shucks I don't know if that's a very good idee for a shy, retirin' bachelor like me but -

NORAH: (laughing) Let's all go to the kitchen, then.

(They exit quickly in a merry group. Irish is left alone standing in the middle of the room. He looks after the others, then smiles)

IRISH: Sure, but it's been a grand day.

- CURTAIN -

Irish Plays Cupid may be produced royalty free in the Province of Alberta until June 30, 1947. The royalty on each performance outside the Province of Alberta is $3.00.